



# KYARCS Newsletter

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2024

## Winter Field Day 2024

*(Are we having fun yet?)*

Well, Winter Field Day 2024 has just passed and as usual, our club trekked out to make our mark in airwaves. Personally, I always have a feeling of anticipation when its nearing the time for Field Day in the summer. Winter Field Day, not quite as much. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy operating in it, but the setup is not as much fun, to say the least.



When we arrived at the Oil Springs Fire Department #2 (near Paintsville Lake State Park), the weather was cloudy and cool. We started with networking the computers and after finding all the different places in Windows to change settings, we got them talking to each other. Still cloudy and cool as we started unpacking gear and setting up four operating stations. Then came the antennas and, you guessed it, the drizzly cold rain started. One of our members came prepared and brought a good fiberglass pole that he mounted to his truck bed. It seems that the rest of us thought someone else would bring some kind of support structure, but that's what we get for thinking. We setup the driven element of a triband yagi on a 16 foot pole, but had to hold it up with



a six foot section of antenna tower that was mounted about 12 inches for the wall of the fire station. When checking it out, we couldn't receive anything at all on it. We then found out we made an error in the hookup of the feedline. To protect the innocent, we won't go into that mistake. But after correcting that, the antenna still didn't perform well at all. We think it was against that wall and the wall had aluminum coated installation board under the siding. We finally got up a G5RV and two dipoles and I had brought a portable Yaesu ATAS-25. Surprisingly, that little antenna made quite a few CW contacts all

across the country. We did learn that we need to plan and double check with each other for our antennas in our next Field Day. Anyway, we did finally get on the air and started making contacts, but the upper bands started going quite a little while after dark and even 40 meters went quite later in the night. You can see our results later in this article. By the way, the rain stopped in the evening after the antennas were up. But never fear, it came back when we dismantled everything the next day.

But lest you think it was a terrible time, we did have fun a good time and were able to make some good contacts. We also had people visiting to see just what we were doing and what ham radio was about. We had an information table setup with flyers, magazines and other ARRL information. I know that we had at least two non-hams that made some contacts, one of which was an 11 year old girl that made around 10 contacts. She seemed to have a ball and hopefully we can get her to get a license. We had a sign in sheet with 22 people signing in, but I'm sure some of our visitors didn't sign in.

We also had some good food provided by different members. Taco soup, fried potatoes, eggs, hot dogs, cookies and various snacks kept us from starving to death. So thanks goes to Rich – KO4BVP, Donna - K8AEP, Paul – AK4U, Bill – KN4EME and Ken – K4KBR for providing our nourishment.

As far as our results go, they are as follows:

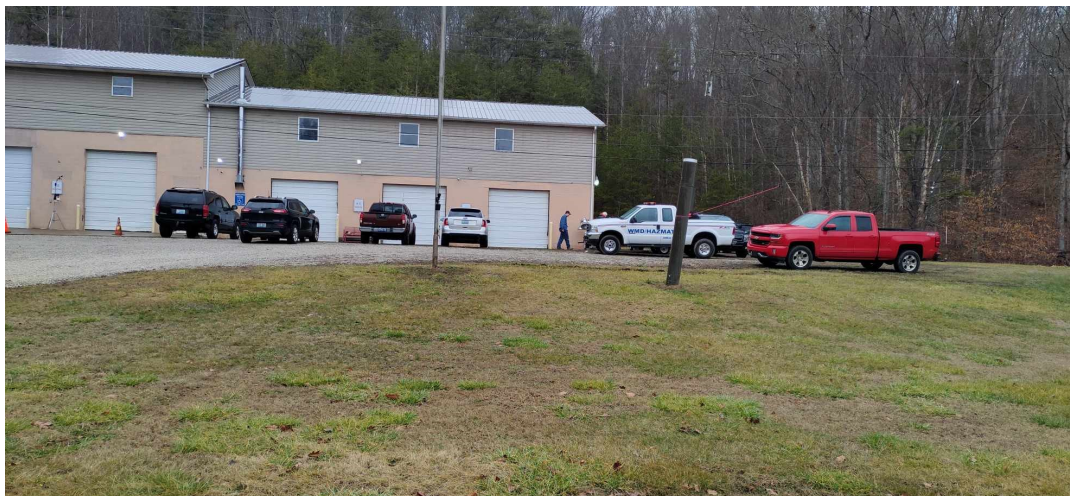
CW Contacts 73

Phone Contacts 151

Total Score 1782

I'm sure we didn't break any records, but we did get stations setup and made contacts across our nation. So we achieved the main goal of a field day, which is to be able to setup and operate multiple stations in case of an emergency. And we also had good fellowship, a great many discussions about our hobby, ate plenty and had a good time.

**Here are some pictures of our Winter Field Day operations.**

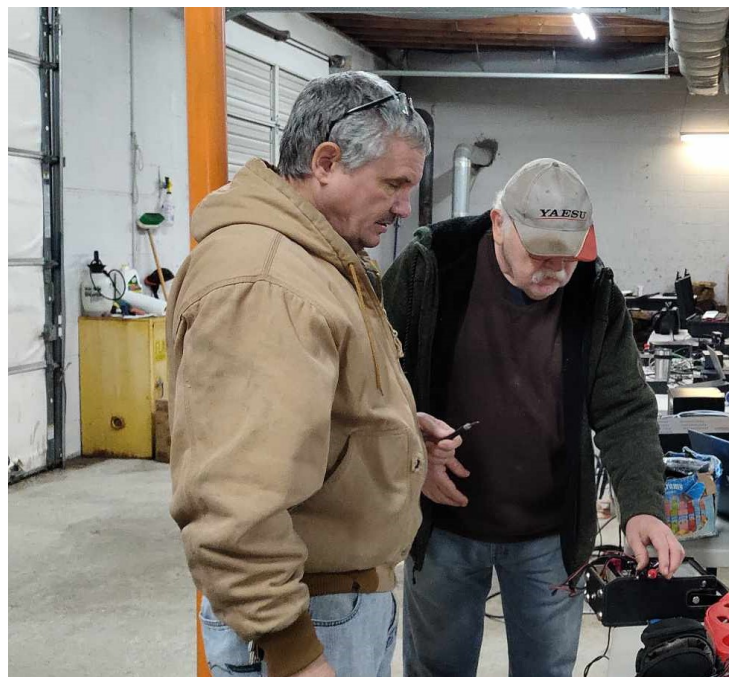


**Our location of operations. Thanks goes to the Oil Springs Fire Station #2.**





**This is a picture of most of the operators at the event.**



**Some antenna work.**





Our operating positions.





Our young visitor  
logging one of her  
contacts.



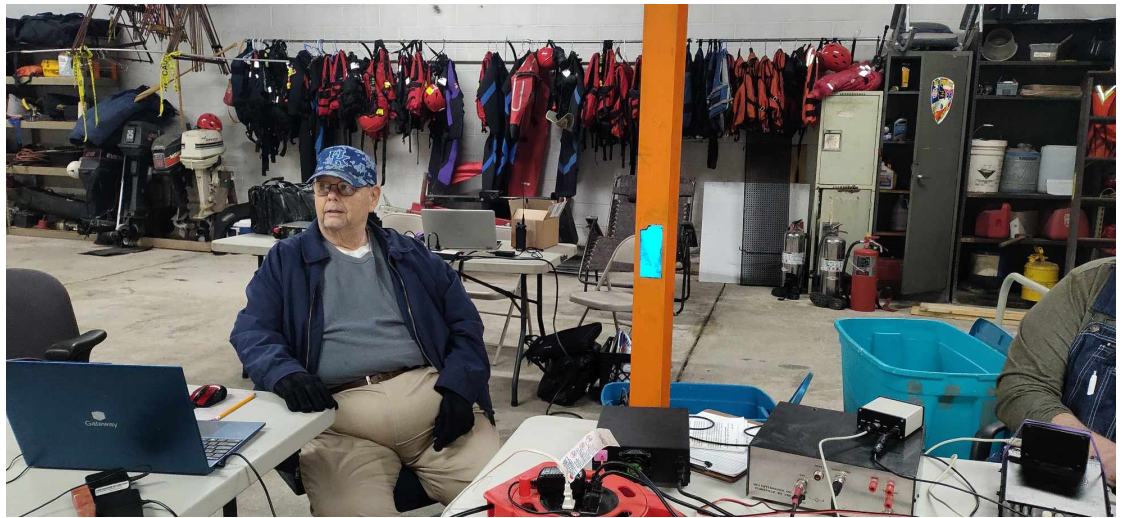
Ken Robinson about  
to catch one.





Paul Combs must be logging a contact while Jerry Clemons watches. Jerry made a few contacts of his own.

Frank Wells looking to see if everything is ready to go.



TJ likes to rest when it gets to be late.





Donna Moore and Paul Combs looking for some stations to contact.



And of course, time out for food!



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# The Club's Communications Test



Our club held a test of local communications of the HF bands on November 11, 2023. At our November meeting, we decided that we needed to know how well we could communicate in case of a widespread power outage. If all the repeaters were down and we needed emergency communications, how could we still communicate? Since a lot of us have ways to operate under battery or generator power, we can still operate our radios and without repeaters, the best bet is to use the HF bands. So, at 11:00 am on Saturday morning, November 11, we met on the 2 meter link system to get coordinated for our tests.

We first tried 10 meters. We had hoped that this would allow hams with only a Technician license to join in also. And to a certain extent, it worked. Many of us could hear other stations, but almost no one could hear everybody on the frequency. This is to be expected since 10 meters is not a band for ground wave and we were way to close for any kind of propagation via the ionosphere. We were hearing signals from Europe much better than local signals. However, we did decide that by relaying, we could get a message passed around to various parts of East Kentucky. I know that at least 15 stations were finally checked in and possibly more.

After much discussion, we decided to go to 40 meters. Now this was much better. I personally could hear most of the stations that checked in and maybe all of them. The signals were much stronger and more reliable than on 10 meters. We also had a station from Harlan county check in, so we know that we can reach more of the state with this band. It seems that this would be the band to use in case of emergency, but it leaves out the licensed technicians and since there are a lot of them, it could mean we weren't getting to quite a few locations in our area. And just because it worked at 11:00 am doesn't mean it would work at 11:00 pm. In fact, it probably wouldn't. So, more experimentation is required. We need to try other bands at other times of the day and we need to maybe devise a way for some of us to jump from one band to another to get messages around. Hopefully, we will get a system that works and will allow us to be of use in a real emergency.

We would like to thank everyone that participated and hope we can count on you in future tests.

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# Skywarn Recognition Day



On December 2, 2023, a few of our members traveled to the US National Weather Service location at Jackson, KY for Skywarn Recognition Day. This is an event developed by the National Weather Service and the ARRL. It highlights the importance of amateur radio operators contributing to the weather service spotters network. Since ham operators are a large part of Skywarn volunteers, they can provide emergency communications between emergency management and the weather service. At times, this is the only communications available and therefore can be of important service. So this day is to recognize all Skywarn spotters serving all the weather service locations in our nation.

Our team went to the location in Jackson and erected a few antennas along with the ones that the weather service already had. They used their own equipment plus the equipment that Jackson had installed. Their goal was to contact as many operators that they could and they used the HF bands plus 2 meter repeaters. A side goal was to contact hams at other weather service locations. The team was treated to lunch and made to feel welcome. From all accounts, they had a good time and made some contacts, though I don't have the totals. But totals are not what the event is all about. Its about developing a working relationship with the weather service and that is what our team accomplished.

The team from our club was as follows:

Frank Wells	KY4FW	Donna Moore	K8AEP
Nathan Lemaster	K4NLS	Paul Combs	AK4U
Frank Belcher	KS4XL	Ken Robinson	K4KBR

**Following are some photos from the event.**





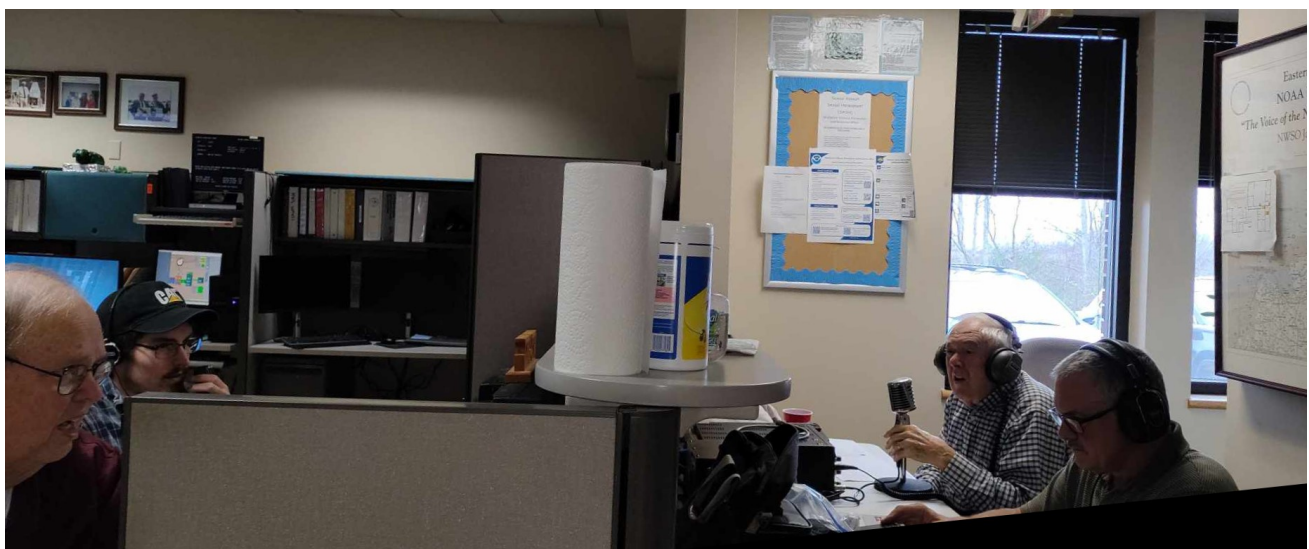
**Our team at the Weather Service office.**



**Ken Robinson and Paul Combs at their operating positions.**

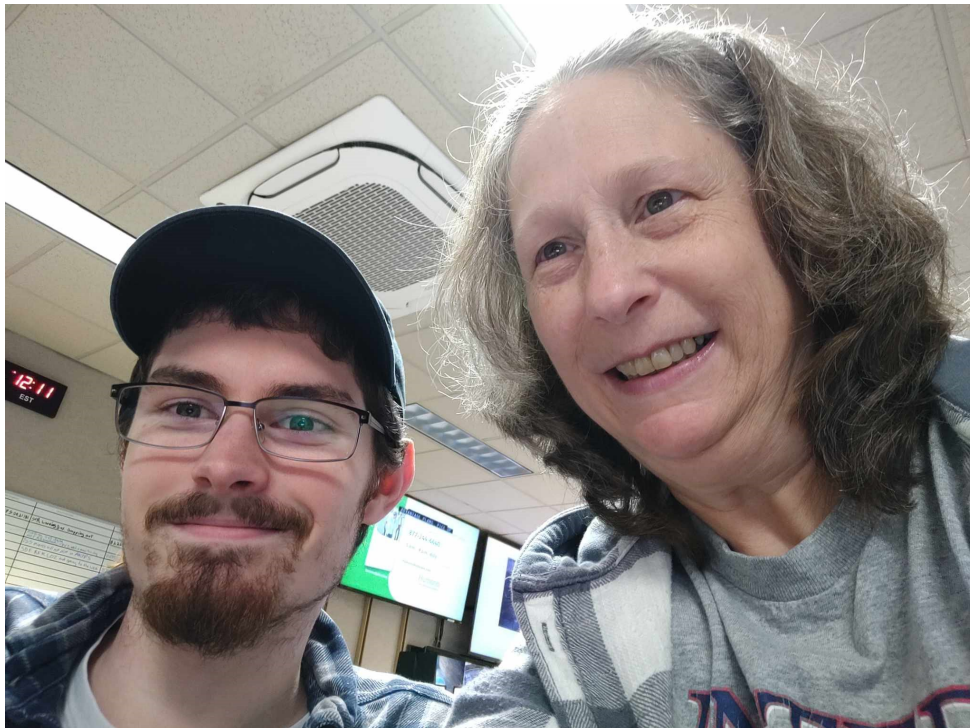


**This is a picture of some of the weather station's employees, along with Frank Belcher sitting like he is a part of the sta-**



**Frank wells, Nathan Lemaster, Ken Robinson and Paul Combs at the four stations set up at the station.**





**Nathan Lemaster and Donna Moore looking pleased about something.**



**Our whole team in front of the Jackson Weather Service, plus one unknown person. Left to right they are, Ken Robinson, Paul Combs, Donna Moore, Frank Belcher, mystery guest, Frank Wells and Nathan Lemaster.**





# Virgil's WWA Award



What do you do when the snow is on the ground and the roads are completely covered ? Well, our club secretary, Virgil Ferguson—K4CUP) took the opportunity to join in the hunt for stations participating in the WWA (World Wide Award). This event was held the whole month of January and its purpose was to promote friendship across the world and to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Marconi's birth. So Virgil started his quest to work as many of these stations as he could. He did very well and ended up with the certificate shown to the left. He earned 1915 points and was ranked 587 out of 110118 participants. That sure is a nice effort on his part. Virgil worked SSB and CW on eight different bands. So congratulations goes to him from everyone in the club.



**Here are the attendees of our Feb. 1st meeting.**

**Gail Herald, Bob Herald, Austin Denyer, TJ Hoover, David Heinzelman, Frank Wells, Bill Hamm, Vigil Ferguson, Robert Stanley, John Hager, Ken Robinson, Richard Salisbury, Ron Grossl, Donna Moore, Samantha Morley, James Morley, Paul Combs, Savannah Gillispie. Also not pictured, Andrew Coleman**



# Focus on Websites



A couple more websites that may be of interest to some of you.



[https://www.qsl.net/  
k4avx/kynbook/  
kynbook.html#Q](https://www.qsl.net/k4avx/kynbook/kynbook.html#Q)

If you have ever wanted to check into the Kentucky CW traffic net, this page can certainly help. Even if you have operated a lot of CW, listening to traffic nets can leave you out in left field. This website explains just how they work and gives examples of typical sessions. It also explains the abbreviations that are used in cw. And if you have listened to cw nets, you have heard some strange Q signals that are not in your normal Q signal list. So these special net Q signals are listed.

So if you would like to get into cw nets, this is the most comprehensive explanation of how to do it that I have seen.

[https://www.varac-  
hamradio.com/](https://www.varac-hamradio.com/)

If you operate using the digital modes on HF, this site may be of interest to you. You may have made a ton of contacts on FT8 and noticed that it is kind of like watching grass grow. Its great for contacting dx or needed states, but it leaves a little to be desired when it comes to actually having a conversation. Well, this new mode, (at least to me), can solve that short coming. The program is called VarAC and it uses the same set-up as FT8 or PSK. It uses a computer interfaced to your radio to allow you to converse via keyboard to other hams. This page can get you started. There are two programs, both free, that you need to download and this site leads you to both downloads. The software lets you operate in several ways, but you can certainly just get on and chat to your heart's content. I had a 30 minute QSO with a guy in St. Lucia and didn't miss a letter that he sent. Besides this site, you should probably look up VarAC on Youtube to get the hang of how to install and operate this great mode.

Have Fun.

# KY4ARC Club Officers

President Rich Salisbury KO4BVP

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Austin Denyer W4ALD

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Virgil Ferguson K4CUP

k4cup16@gmail.com 606-624-6707

PIO Officer—Fred Jones WA4SWF

Club Chaplin — Dave Heinzelman N4DLH

Feel free to contact any one of them if you have questions pertaining to the club.

You can also go to our website at:

**[www.ky4arc.com](http://www.ky4arc.com)**

**We meet every month on the first Thursday of the month at Mayo Methodist Church in Paintsville. Meeting time is 7:00 pm with testing and socialization starting at 6:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.**





